

## **Chapter Two**

### **ISTEP+: Graduation Examination**

### **End of Course Assessments (ECAs)**

#### **The Purpose of ISTEP+ End of Course Assessments**

The purpose of the *Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+)* program is to measure student achievement. In particular, ISTEP+ reports student achievement levels according to the *Indiana Academic Standards* that were adopted by the Indiana State Board of Education. *The ISTEP+ End of Course Assessments (ECAs)* are criterion-referenced assessments developed specifically for students completing their instruction in Algebra I, Biology I, or English I0.

#### **Structure and Content of ECAs for 2013-2014**

In light of the implications of scores for students, schools, and school corporations with regard to school accountability, test administrators must be accurate and methodical in test preparation and administration, as well as in reporting student demographic characteristics. As participation in the Biology I assessment satisfies the requirement for NCLB, testing personnel should note the following regarding the administration of the 2013-2014 ISTEP+: Algebra I, Biology I, and English I0:

- I. The Graduation Examination consists of two assessments: Algebra I and English I0.
  - a. Algebra I consists of four item types: constructed-response, multiple-choice, gridded-response, and graphing. Algebra I has the following structure:
    - i. Students may use calculators for a portion of the assessment. Students completing paper-and-pencil assessments may use their own calculators or calculators supplied by the classroom teacher. Students completing online assessments may use the online calculator, their own calculator, or a calculator supplied by the classroom teacher. Contact the school's Test Coordinator for a list of the electronic devices that are NOT permitted for use on any portion of the assessment, or go to <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/calculatorpolicyalgebrai.pdf>.
    - ii. The assessment includes gridded-response items. Blank grids are also available for download at <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/blankgriddedresponsesheet.pdf>.
    - iii. The assessment includes a reference sheet for students to use while testing. Students can use the reference sheet to help them solve some of the problems on the test. The reference sheet can be found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/algireferencesheet.pdf>.
  - b. English I0 consists of three item types: constructed-response, multiple-choice, and a writing prompt.
2. Biology I consists of two item types: constructed-response and multiple-choice.
3. Sample items are available at <http://www.doe.in.gov/assessment/end-course-assessments-ecas> in the "Item Samplers" section.

## Testing Accommodations

The approved ISTEP+ accommodations outlined in *Appendix C* apply to End of Course Assessments (ECAs). The provision of these testing accommodations may be administered by classroom teachers in addition to program area staff (i.e., EL teacher). Teachers need to be made aware of each student's allowable accommodations.

## Algebra I and English 10 ECA Cut Scores

The State Board of Education, on the basis of recommendations from Indiana teachers, the Technical Advisory Committee, and the Education Roundtable, set the passing scores on the Algebra I and English 10 ECAs in August 2010. A document containing the cut scores can be found at <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/eca-cut-scores.pdf>.

## Retest Opportunities

The ECAs are offered four times during the school year, in addition to a summer window. From the four possible school-year based ECA administrations, each school must select two ECA assessment windows: 1) a primary window aligned with the completion of instruction; and 2) a "Retest" window - an additional opportunity for any students who have not passed the assessment and need to retake the ECA (Algebra I and/or English 10) in order to meet graduation requirements.

State law limits students who have not passed a portion of the ECAs to **a maximum of one retest each semester**. The fall semester is defined by the Fall and Early Winter Assessment Windows, and the spring semester includes the Late Winter and Spring Assessment Windows. *Trimester schools are asked to contact the Office of Student Assessment for guidance regarding testing windows and eligibility of students to participate in the assessment.*

**The summer testing administration is not a retest window.** Schools must offer the course for Algebra I and/or English 10 credit, and students must complete the course to be eligible to participate in the ECA Summer assessment. **Students enrolled in remediation (i.e., not the Algebra I or English 10 course) are not eligible to test during the summer window.**

A student may take the ECAs until he or she meets the *Indiana Academic Standards* for Algebra I and English 10. Retests include only the graduation examination(s) (Algebra I and/or English 10) in which the student did not attain a score at or above *Pass*.

In terms of Biology I, schools only test those students who actually completed the Biology I course at their school. Additionally, there are no retesters in Biology I. While students are required to take the Biology I ECA as a requirement of No Child Left Behind, students are not required to pass the assessment. Therefore, school corporations do not offer retests for the Biology I ECA.

No student is eligible to receive a diploma without demonstrating mastery of the *Indiana Academic Standards* tested on the ECAs. Students, parents, and school officials should also be aware that the Indiana General Assembly has established in IC 20-32-4 that students who do not achieve a passing score must retake the ECAs at least once in each succeeding school year as a condition for graduating.

Students eligible to take the fall and spring retest include students in the class of 2012 and beyond who have failed to pass the Algebra I and/or the English 10 ECA(s).

### **ECA Results Displayed on Transcript**

Per IC 20-33-2-13, a student's latest ISTEP+ program test results must be included on the student's high school transcript. Latest ISTEP+ program tests include the Algebra I, English 10, and Biology I End of Course Assessments. Schools have two options for displaying ECA results on transcripts: 1) the numerical scores (including the student score and *Pass cut score*); or 2) the *Pass/Did Not Pass* performance level.

### **Graduation Examination Requirement and Waiver Process**

The graduation examination requirement consists of the Algebra I and English 10 End of Course Assessments (ECAs). Every graduating Indiana student must demonstrate mastery of the *Indiana Academic Standards* assessed by these ECAs. **The most straightforward way to meet this requirement is to: (1) attain scores at or above the passing scale scores in the Algebra I and English 10 ECAs; and (2) meet all state and local graduation requirements.**

In addition, a student may demonstrate mastery of the academic standards in other ways:

- By fulfilling the requirements of an evidence-based waiver or a work-readiness waiver, as stated in IC 20-32-4.

### **Demonstration of Mastery of Indiana Academic Standards**

Indiana law **does not require that all students achieve a passing score on each of the ECAs in order to receive a high school diploma. Rather, the law requires that students demonstrate mastery of the standards that are tested on the ECAs.** The statute provides three ways in which students can demonstrate mastery of these *Indiana Academic Standards*. The first is to achieve passing scores on the Algebra I and English 10 ECAs. In addition, IC 20-32-4 as amended by PL 193-1999, provides that (for full text see *Appendix D*):

A student who does not achieve a passing score on the ECAs may be eligible to graduate if **all** of the following occur:

- (1) Takes the graduation examination in each subject area (the Algebra I and/or English 10 ECA) in which the student did not achieve a passing score at least one time every school year after the school year in which the student first takes the graduation examination.
- (2) Completes remediation opportunities provided to the student by the student's school.
- (3) Maintains a school attendance rate of at least ninety-five percent (95%) with excused absences not counting against the student's attendance.
- (4) Maintains at least a "C" average or the equivalent in the courses comprising the credits specifically required for graduation by rule of the State Board.
- (5) Otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

(6) Either:

(A) completes:

- (i) the course and credit requirements for a general diploma, including the career academic sequence;
- (ii) a workforce readiness assessment; and
- (iii) at least one industry certification that appears on the state board's approved industry certification list, which must be updated annually with recommendations from the department of workforce development established by IC 22-4.1-2-1; or

(B) obtains a written recommendation from a teacher of the student in each subject area in which the student has not achieved a passing score on the graduation examination (the Algebra I and/or English 10 ECA). The written recommendation must be aligned with the governing body's relevant policy and must be concurred in by the principal of the student's school and be supported by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area based on:

- (i) tests other than the graduation examination; or
- (ii) classroom work.

In order to help schools determine who is eligible for the waiver option [IC 20-32-4-4(6)(A) above] in the 2013-2014 school year, the following information may be helpful:

- 1) For students who entered high school in the 2006-07 school year or after, the "courses required for graduation" in computing the "C" average for the "evidence-based" and "work-readiness" waivers must include the following 34 credits:
  - a. Language arts - 8 credits
  - b. Social studies - 4 credits (Must include 2 credits in US History, 1 credit in US Government and 1 credit in "another social studies course, Global Economics or Consumer Economics")
  - c. Mathematics - 4 credits (Must include 2 credits in Algebra I or Integrated Mathematics I and 2 additional mathematics credits. All 4 credits must be earned after the student enters high school. 2016 graduates and beyond must earn 2 credits of math or quantitative reasoning during the student's junior or senior year.)
  - d. Science - 4 credits (Must include 2 credits in Biology and 2 credits in another science from which at least 1 credit must be in a Physical or Earth Space Science course.)
  - e. Health and wellness - 1 credit
  - f. Physical education - 2 credits
  - g. Career-academic sequence - 6 credits (through Class of 2015); "College and Career Pathway courses" – 6 credits (Class of 2016 and beyond)
  - h. Flex credits - 5 credits
- 2) A "career academic sequence," referenced in IC 20-32-4-4(6)(A)(i), is a flexible sequence of electives designed to help students explore and prepare for specific career areas or groups of related occupations. Any combination of electives may qualify for a career academic sequence. Indiana has developed lists of career academic sequences, called College and Career Pathways, which can be downloaded for use at [www.doe.in.gov/pathways](http://www.doe.in.gov/pathways).
- 3) A "workforce readiness assessment," referenced in IC 20-32-4-4(6)(A)(ii), is determined locally and may include the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), Work Keys, or any other career or work-readiness assessment deemed appropriate by the school corporation.

- 4) Professional Career Internship and Cooperative Education courses are state-approved course titles defined by the Indiana Department of Education. Course descriptions are available at [www.doe.in.gov/publications/courses.html](http://www.doe.in.gov/publications/courses.html).
- 5) A “workforce credential recommended by the student’s school,” referenced in IC 20-32-4-4(6)(A)(iii), is any career assessment, state or national work-readiness certification, or other credential that assesses a student’s ability to transition to the workforce. Examples include state and national technical skills certifications (e.g., Microsoft Office Certification, ProStart Certification, etc.), a Work Keys assessment, a Work Ethics certificate, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), or any other work-readiness assessment deemed appropriate by the local school corporation.

**In the case of a student with a disability (as defined in IC 20-35-1-2, Appendix D), the student’s case conference committee may determine that the student is eligible to graduate if it is determined that all of the following have occurred:**

- (1) The student’s teacher of record, in consultation with a teacher in each subject area in which the student has not achieved a passing score, makes a written recommendation to the Case Conference Committee. The recommendation must be supported by the principal of the student’s school, as well as by documentation that the student has attained the academic standard in the subject area based upon tests other than the ECAs or classroom work.
- (2) The student meets all of the following requirements:
  - (A) Retakes the ECAs in each subject area (Algebra I and/or English 10) in which the student did not achieve a passing score as often as required by the student’s Individualized Education Program.
  - (B) Completes remediation opportunities provided to the student by the student’s school to the extent required by the student’s Individualized Education Program.
  - (C) Maintains a school attendance rate of at least ninety-five percent (95%) to the extent required by the student’s Individualized Education Program with excused absences not counting against the student’s attendance.
  - (D) Maintains at least a “C” average or the equivalent in the courses comprising the 34 credits specifically required for graduation by the State Board.
  - (E) Otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

## **Special Cases**

### **In-State Student Transfers**

Just as receiving school corporations, nonpublic, and charter schools have always had to determine if incoming transfer students have met course requirements, receiving school corporations, nonpublic schools, and charter schools must be ultimately responsible for determining whether students have met the graduation requirements established by law relative to the ECAs. The Indiana Department of Education and its contractor have designed a system of reports and labels to facilitate the ability of school corporations, nonpublic schools, and charter schools to convey information about a student’s status (Labels will be provided that clearly indicate whether students met standards.). **In order for this system to function smoothly, the sending school corporation must ensure that the student’s permanent record contains up-to-date information regarding completed**

**coursework and the student's status relative to the ECAs prior to transferring the student's permanent record to the receiving school corporation.** This information can be transmitted using the labels that are provided with the ECA reports, student transcripts, or other mechanisms.

To confirm a transfer student's status with regard to ECAs, the receiving school should contact the sending school or search the ECA Status Report located in the "Report" tab on Learning Connection in the "Admin Reports" section.

## **Out-of-State Student Transfers**

All students who have moved from another state to Indiana are subject to the Indiana graduation examination requirements.

Graduation examinations in other states may be given at different grade levels and measure different knowledge and skills than the Indiana ECAs. A student may be eligible to graduate without passing the ECAs if the student successfully demonstrates attainment of *Indiana Academic Standards* under the provision of IC 20-32-4. One of the criteria includes presentation of written documentation that the student has attained the academic standards based on tests other than the Indiana ECAs, or on classroom assignments. Results from another state's graduation examination could be considered as documentation, but are not to be substituted for participation in Indiana's ECAs.

## **Alternative Education Students**

Any alternative education student desiring to receive an Indiana high school diploma must take the ECAs.

ECA materials for alternative education program students are delivered to school corporations along with materials for other students. The ECAs are administered to these students in facilities owned or used by the school. This includes the alternative education program location or a high school facility. With the exception of accommodations for a student with disabilities, administration must be consistent for every administration of the graduation examination. Alternative education program students must take the ECAs under the same conditions and within the same testing windows as students in the general education program, although the time of day may be adjusted so the assessment is given during the hours in which the alternative education program customarily operates.

**Under Indiana law, every student who intends to graduate from high school must take the ECAs.** IC 20-10.30-8-7 indicates that organizers of alternative education programs may receive waivers of State Board rules, including "waivers of certain high school graduation requirements." Taking the ECAs is a statutory requirement and is **not subject to waiver** under this provision.

Every Indiana resident has the right to pursue a high school diploma. If an alternative education student completes all the graduation course requirements, but does not pass the ECAs, the student may still receive a high school diploma if the student demonstrates mastery of the *Indiana Academic Standards* under the provision of IC 20-32-4. Otherwise the student is entitled to continue to receive educational services until graduation requirements are met (just as a student could, in the past, continue to receive educational services until course requirements were met).

If mastery of the Algebra I and English 10 *Indiana Academic Standards* is demonstrated through alternative means, the principal must concur with the teacher recommendation that a student has attained the *Indiana Academic Standards* as measured by the ECAs. For the alternative education student, it is still the principal of the high school that grants the diploma who must concur with the teacher recommendation that the student has met the academic performance standards measured by the assessment.

## **Adult Education Students**

An adult education student may be eligible to graduate without passing the ECAs, but every student who intends to receive an Indiana high school diploma must take the ECAs. The adult education student may graduate if the student demonstrates attainment of the *Indiana Academic Standards* under the provision of IC 20-32-4. Otherwise, the student is entitled to continue to receive educational services until graduation requirements are met (just as students could, in the past, continue to receive education services until course requirements were met).

If an adult education student has previously qualified for special services, or currently has an IEP or Section 504 Plan, any accommodations employed in performance on other assessments would be applied to the ECAs; however, the assessment may not be modified. Students are not to receive shortened assessments, are not allowed to choose from a reduced number of possible answers, are not to have the reading comprehension portions read to them, and may not receive simplified instructions. A complete discussion concerning accommodations is located in *Appendix C*.

## **Students Having Fulfilled All Graduation Requirements Except for the Assessment Requirement**

The graduation examination requirement applies to all students who expect to graduate from an Indiana high school. Adult students having fulfilled all graduation requirements except for the assessment requirement must take and pass the Algebra I and/or English 10 ECAs. Students should take the ECAs after they have had an opportunity to learn the content contained in the *Indiana Academic Standards* for Algebra I and English 10.

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) offers the ECAs for adult students once each fall and spring via identified Adult Education centers. A list of these sites is available by clicking this link: [http://www.in.gov/dwd/files/ECA\\_TestingSiteList.pdf](http://www.in.gov/dwd/files/ECA_TestingSiteList.pdf). Students that require accommodations on an ECA must notify the testing site with documentation.

Information for adults needing to fulfill the assessment requirement can be found by accessing the Department of Workforce Development webpage: <http://www.in.gov/dwd/adulted.htm>. Contact the Department of Workforce Development, Division of Adult Education with questions via email [AdultEd@dwd.in.gov](mailto:AdultEd@dwd.in.gov).

## ECA Assessment Windows for 2013-2014

Window	Dates	Administration Type
Fall*	October 21 – November 15, 2013	Online
Early Winter	December 9 – 20, 2013 (Part 1) January 6 – 17, 2014 (Part 2)	Online or Paper-and-Pencil
Late Winter*	February 10 – March 7, 2014	Online
Spring	April 21 – June 4, 2014	Online or Paper-and-Pencil
Summer*	June 19 – July 31, 2014	Online

\*Window may be reduced based on actual selected test dates.

For additional information, please access

<http://www.doe.in.gov/achievement/assessment/end-course-assessments-ecas>